

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
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DRAFTED BY EB/OA:MHSTYLES:VLV
APPROVED BY EB/TRA:JRATWOOD
NEA/IAI - JMCBRIDE
-----088582 130043Z /73
O 122209Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, IS

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - PRESIDENTIAL ACTION ON AIR FARES

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER DATED MAY 9 FROM PRESIDENT
TO CHAIRMAN, CAB:

QUOTE. DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I HAVE REVIEWED YOUR PROPOSED
ORDER (DOCKET 32579) DATED MAY 1, 1978, WHICH SUSPENDS
PASSENGER FARES FILED BY EL AL ISRAEL AIRLINES LIMITED.

AS I INDICATED TO YOU PREVIOUSLY IN APPROVING YOUR SUSPEN-
SION OF CONTRACT CARGO RATES FOR BRITISH AIRWAYS (LETTER
DATED OCTOBER 3, 1977), I AM GENERALLY OPPOSED TO SUSPENDING
LOW FARES. IN THIS CASE, HOWEVER, OUR INTERNATIONAL
AVIATION POLICY IS BETTER SERVED BY WITHHOLDING OUR APPROVAL
OF THESE FARES UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL APPROVES THE
COMPETITIVE AND ECONOMIC LOW FARES OF TRANS WORLD AIRLINES
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THAT OFFER EVEN GREATER PRICE AND SERVICE BENEFITS TO AIR
TRAVELERS. I ALSO EXPECT THIS ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED BEFORE
OTHER BILATERAL AVIATION ISSUES ARE NEGOTIATED. THUS, FOR
FOREIGN POLICY REASONS, I HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE NO ACTION
AND ALLOW THE BOARD'S ORDER TO BECOME EFFECTIVE. UNQUOTE.

2. TWA IS NOTIFYING ISRAELI AUTHORITIES THAT IT HAS CEASED

SELLING AND ADVERTISING THE APEX FARE AND IT IS ASKING ISRAELIS NOT TO INTERFERE WITH DEPLANING PASSENGERS WHO MAY HAVE ALREADY BOUGHT TICKETS. IT APPEARS THAT A FEW PASSENGERS (POSSIBLY FORTY) TRAVELING ON ALREADY SOLD APEX TICKETS WILL ARRIVE ON TWA'S MONDAY FLIGHT, AND THE ESTIMATED TOTAL OF APEX TICKETS SOLD IS ABOUT 600.

3. EMBASSY REQUESTED ADVISE ISRAELIS THAT TWA HAS CEASED TO SELL OR ADVERTISE ITS APEX FARE. IT SHOULD ALSO, IN LOW KEY FASHION, REQUEST ISRAELI COOPERATION IN ALLOWING PASSENGERS WHO HAVE ALREADY PURCHASED APEX TICKETS TO DEPLANE. TWA WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION IF ISRAELIS WISH TO AUDIT DEPLANING PASSENGERS TO ASSURE THEMSELVES THAT NO ADDITIONAL TICKETS ARE BEING SOLD.

4. IN VIEW PRESIDENT'S LETTER, DEPT IS ADVISING ISRAELI EMBASSY THAT IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO CONFIRM DATES FOR OVERALL CIVAIR NEGOTIATIONS. WE ARE ASKING THAT ISRAELIS ADVISE US WHETHER THEY PREPARED APPROVE TWA'S APEX FARE.

EMBASSY SHOULD TAKE SAME POSITION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELIS.

5. WE UNDERSTAND MINISTER TRANSPORT AMIT WILL RAISE THIS MATTER WITH CAB CHAIRMAN KAHN AT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MAY 15. VANCE

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